

Stanislaw Stronski's *La légende amoureuse* de Bertran de Born and Ezra Pound's "Near Perigord"

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Even though Stanislaw Stronski's *La légende amoureuse de Bertran de Born* was published in 1914, the year before Pound wrote "Near Perigord" in 1915, no commentator used yet the work of the Polish provençalist for the interpretation of the poem. Actually we have already four excellent commentators in this field: Thomas E. Connolly in "Ezra Pound's 'Near Perigord': The Background of a Poem,"¹ K. K. Ruthven in *A Guide to Ezra Pound's Personae* (1926),² Stuart Y. McDougal in *Ezra Pound and the Troubadour Tradition*,³ and Peter Makin in *Provence and Pound*.⁴ Their erudite works are great helps to lay readers such as myself, but they have left uninterpreted one curious line:

I loved a woman. The stars fell from heaven,⁵

which appears in the early version of the poem right after the epigraph of Part III, "*Ed eran due in uno, ed uno in due; Inferno, XXVIII, 125.*" This personal touch, dropped already when the poet collected the work in *Lustra*, 1916, is really precious for the interpretation of the poem. Bertran de Born, a troubadour poet and knight, lost the favour of a lady called Maeut de Montagnac according to a troubadour biography. In despair he wrote a song, "Dompna pois de me no·us cal" ("Lady, since you care nothing for me")⁶ in which he borrowed one beautiful quality from each of the ladies he knows to create an ideal substitute for his Maeut. Stronski proves with careful studies of historical facts and genealogies that Maeut did not exist except in the imagination of the provençal biographers who wrote about these troubadour singers a century later than their life time. Pound in "Near Perigord" keeps asking one same question, whether the poem of Bertran's was a genuine love poem or merely the troubadour's political intrigue for calling an alliance against his enemies near Perigord. The whole poem consists of the ramification and variation of that one question, which is in short whether Maeut de Montagnac really existed or not. Who is this woman loved by Pound in the line just quoted except Maeut, and what does the stars having fallen signify except the shock that Pound suffered at learning Stronski's convincing argument to deny her existence? It is true that Pound never mentioned Stronski's work. Nevertheless, the hypothesis that Stronski's study directly motivated Pound to search her existence and identity in the poem is worth trying. The aim of this paper is to prove this hypothesis and test what differences this hypothesis can make in the interpretation of the poem.

First of all, why was Maeut de Montagnac so close to Pound that Stronski's disproving of her actuality afflicted him with such a blow? One can easily sense that the American poet born in Idaho very curiously identifies himself with the troubadours early in his career as a poet. Witness "In Epitaphium Eius" (In His Epitaph) published in *A Lume Spento*, his earliest collection of poems. With the admirable frankness of youth, Pound declares the love of troubadours to be most universal and divine. They may have loved each fair face of their ladies but more

loved the essence tho each casement bore
A different semblance than the one before.⁷

As Plato in *Symposium*, they loved the essence and entity of beauty behind the phenomenon, for the love they were endowed with was identical to the divine love, "whereby the sun doth move/ And all the stars,"⁸ as Dante sang at the end of *Paradiso*. Moved by this primal love in which man can be unified with the Creator, Dante follows Beatrice to heaven. Absorbed into this love, the same poet of Tuscany stands enraptured in adoration to God at the end of *Paradiso*. Such was the aim of a poet, and such should it be even now, Pound claims. Sometimes the Platonic entity not merely shines at times from behind the object as Mallarmé requires for poetry,⁹ but even overflows the hours of love and carries away the poet out of the order of time, for instance, in "Horae Beatae Inscripto,"

How will this beauty, when I am far hence,
Sweep back upon me and engulf my mind!

How will these hours, when we twain are gray,
Turned in their sapphire tide, come flooding o'er us!¹⁰

Under the mask of Cino da Pistoia, an Italian troubadour,¹¹ the poet took the open road in "Cino,"

Lips, words, and you snare them,
Dreams, words, and they are as jewels,
Strange spells of old deity,
Ravens, nights, allurements:
And they are not;
Having become the souls of song.¹²

The souls of song are the love and adoration with which the poet is to evoke the sapphire tide of the Platonic entity in the midst of the quotidian, together with the help of "the virtue of her soul."¹³ So fond of the particular mask Pound was that he made a fictitious troubadour called Cino in "Near Perigord." In *A Draft of the First XXX Cantos*, the cities rose and fell while the itinerant poets and singers

travelled and celebrated their occasional raptures at the timeless and their insight subsequently acquired. Pound learned such simultaneity of ecstasy and insight through Richard of St. Victor already in 1909,¹⁵ and cultivated it all his life. "Ubi amor, ibi oculus,"¹⁶ wrote Richard of St. Victor (Where there is love, there is eye [for intellectual insight]). Not only Pound published such brief thoughts of Richard on love in *Ricardo da S. Vittore: Pensieri sull' Amore* in 1956, but also quoted from it for epigraph in Canto XC, right before the paradisaal scene:

Animus humanus amor non est,
sed ab ipso amor procedit, et
ideo seipso non diligit, sed amore
qui seipso procedit.¹⁷

Maeut de Montagnac can make the favorite object of his *eros*, particularly because Bertran, her servant and singer, was peculiarly a favorite mask of Pound's in his belligerence and even his iracibility which the American poet certainly took for a virile quality. The poet loved Bertran's "Be'm platz lo gais temps de Pascor" (The gay season of Easter pleases me much), and rewrote the joy of battles in "Sestina Altaforte" for *Exultations* (1909), though any dramatic declamation in English language unfortunately tends to recall the Elizabethan stage villainy and works much against the lovely form of a sestina which leads back over again to a single theme. The figure of Bertran, who scribbles and swears in "Near Perigord," l. 97, reminds one immediately of Pound, who reportedly worked on the typewriter in the military detention camp of Pisa, and "swore well and profusely over typing errors."¹⁸

Yet the best resemblance between Bertran and himself Pound would like to be remembered is that Sir Bertran wrote the famous poem of the borrowed lady (*domna soiseubuda*), and imagined the ideal lady, collecting from each lady he knows one good quality, for Pound's poetry is a work of the same kind of assemblage. Pound in 1911 started to publish a series of translations and essays, "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris" in *The New Age*, where he suggested a "New Method in Scholarship."¹⁹ The method, already exemplified in *The Spirit of Romance*, consists of collecting the luminous details behind which appears transparent the Platonic entity. As the title recalls, the source of Pound's method is Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* (Of Isis and Osiris), where the Greek philosopher interpreted the pious act of Isis' gathering the torn limbs of Osiris as an allegory of a Platonist's searching the radiant entity hidden in each phenomenon.²⁰ The role of a poet as a follower of Isis and as a collector of the luminous details through adoration in order to contact directly the radiant entity haunted Pound's imagination. For instance, in discussing Guido Cavalcanti, Pound quotes from Rossetti's translation,

When with other women I behold my Love —
Not that the rest were women to mine eyes
Who only as her shadows seemed to move.²¹

Ladies pass by Cavalcanti's lover like the shadows of the sapphire tide projecting from the center, bright only now and then when they happen to be overlapped on the entity. No other lines can explain so well as these of Cavalcanti the particular ecstasy Pound presumably enjoyed when he thought of the relationship of Maeut and other ladies, of Maeut as the sum total of the luminous details, and of other ladies as the shadows in phenomena with one bright quality through which the radiance flashes. It is quite natural that Pound cherished Bertran de Born for his secret self and the very type of poets and troubadours, and cherished Maeut for the very type of the objects of troubadours' love.

That Pound was a slow starter in the practice of Vorticist poetry is attributed to his habitual collecting of the luminous details. In 1914, when Wyndham Lewis started with other British and French avant-garde artists the Vorticist Movement and blasted all the existing institutions for releasing the energy tied hitherto, and yet tried to create the delicate life and quietude of art,²² Pound was delighted to join and contributed his poems to *Blast*. Such short poems as "Pastoral" or "Gnomic Verse," however, disappointed Lewis, for he found nothing blasted in them. Pound never understood Vorticism, so complained Lewis in *Time and Western Man*.²³ In view of Pound's gathering Osiris' limbs, one suspects that Pound believed all his poems are Vorticist poems simply as they are. The entity he pursues is blasted since the creation of the phenomenal world, mythologically when Typhon tore Osiris' body.²⁴ His work was to collect the torn fragments and to rearrange them into something rich and strange with delicate life and quietude. Yet in 1915, by writing "Near Perigord," Pound suddenly came to blast the Victorian iambic poetry into fragments and wrote exactly as Wyndham Lewis required for Vorticists. The delicate world of Poundian short poems in 1915, inheriting troubadours' *melopoeia*, Rossetti's Victorization of Dante and Fenollosa's Oriental flavour, modernized through the influence of the French symbolists, burst out into a rather coarse new experiment of confused and impulsive writing, where the released energy certainly whirls into vortices of incoherence and ununifiable details.

Nothing but a tremendous impact on the core of the poet's creative life can explain this amazing outburst. Having surveyed the very map of Pound's creative life, one realizes Maeut was at the very core, at least when Pound wears the favorite mask of Sir Bertran. Where can one find the extraordinary blow but in the loss of Maeut when Stronski calmly annihilated her in his historical study? The depth of the void her loss caused in Pound can only be measured by his tireless pursuit of her variants in *The Cantos*, Helen of Troy, Eleanor d'Aquitaine, Cyprian Aphrodite, Cunizza da Romano, Inez da Castro, Koré and numerous others. Searching the Ideal through them Pound had to reach the figure of Isis-Kuanon, their prototype and entity in Canto XC, creating on the way "the great acorn of light" of the whole *Cantos* (116/795). Before Stronski, Albert Stimming speculated about Maeut and her two sisters to reach the conclusion that all these three sisters are but one in Maeut.²⁶ It is more than likely that Pound studied Stimming's *Bertran von Born* (1913), yet Stimming mercifully considered Maeut had existed, though wondering about much of

the dubiousness of troubadour biographies.

Stronski first presents the five *razos* or prose explications for provençal poems, which had been accepted as the factual background of Bertran de Born's poems. In *Razo* I, Bertran de Born was a lover to a lady, gentle, young and greatly appreciated, whose name was My Lady Maeut de Montagnac, wife of Guillem de Talairan,

Bertran de Born si era drutz d'une domna gentil e jove e fort prezada, et avia non ma domna Maeuz de Montaingnac, moiller d'En Talairan, qu'era fraire del comte de Peiregors; et ella era filla del vescomte de Torena e seror de ma dompna Maria de Ventadorn e de N'Elis de Monfort. E, segon qu'el dis en son chantar, ela'l parti de si e'il det comjat, don el fo'n mout tristz e iratz, e fez razo que ja mais no la cobraria, ni outra non trobava que fos tan bella ni tan bona ni tan plazens ni tan enseingnada. E penset, pois qu'el non poiria cobrar neguna que'ill pogues esser egals a la soa domna, si ['s] conseillet qu'el en fezes una en aital guisa qu'el soiseubes de las autras bonas dompnas e bellas de chascuna una beutat o un bel senblan o un bel acuillimen o un avinen parlar o un bel captenemen o un bel gran o un bel taill de persona. Et enaissi el anet queren a totas las bonas dompnas que chascuna li dones un d'aquestz dos que m'avetz auzit nomar per restaurar la soa domna c'avía perduda. Et el sirventes qu'el fetz d'aquesta razon vos auziretz nommar totas las domnas a las quals el anet querre socors et ajuda a far la domna soiseubuda. E'l sirventes qu'el fetz d'aquesta razon si comensa :

Domna, pois de mi no'us cal.²⁷

(Bertran de Born was a lover of a lady gentle, young and highly esteemed and had a name, My Lady Maeut de Montagnac, wife of Lord Talairan, who was brother to the Count of Perigord; and she was a daughter of the Viscount of Turenne and a sister to My Lady Maria de Ventadorn and to Lady Elis de Monfort. And as he says in his song, she separated him of herself and gave him a leave to quit her service. He was greatly dejected and irritated of this and reasoned that never would he recover her, nor found any other lady who was so beautiful, so good, so pleasing or so accomplished. And because he could not find anyone who could be equal to his lady, he thought and counselled himself of making a new one in order that he would borrow from each of the good and lovely ladies a beauty or a fair semblance or a tender hospitality or a gracious speech or good manners or a lovely stature or a good figure. And thus he went to seek each

of the good ladies to give to this new lady one of the gifts which you have heard me name for restoring his lady whom he had lost. And in the sirvente which he made on this subject you will hear him name all these ladies to whom he went seeking help and aid for making the lady borrowed. And the sirvente which he made on this subject begins thus:

Lady, since you care nothing for me.)

In Razo II, the reason of Maeut's displeasure is explained. It was Bertran's approach and praise of Lady Guischarde that invited Maeut's rage:

Bertran de Born si era drutz de ma dompna Maeutz de Montaignac, de la moiller de Tallairan, que era aitals dompna com vos ai dich en la razon del sirventes de la «domna soiseubuda». Et si com eu vos dis, ela'l parti de si e det li comjat et encusava lo de ma domna Guiscarda, de la moiller del vescomte de Conborn, d'una valen domna que fon de Bergoingna, sor d'En Guiscart de Beljoc. Avinens domna et enseingnada era, conplida de totas beutatz; si la lauzava fort en comtan et en chantan. Bertrans, enans que'el la vis, era sos amics per lo ben qu'el auzi [a] d'ella, et enans qu'ella fos venguda a marit al vescomte de Comborn; e per alegressa qu'el ac de la soa venguda, si fetz aquestas coblas que dizion:

Ai, Lemozis, francha terra cortesa

E per aquesta domna Guiscarda, si'l parti de si ma domna Maeuz, qu'ela crezia qu'el li volgues meills que ad ella e qu'ella li fezes amor. E per aquest departimen el fez la «dompna soiseubuda» e'l sirventes que ditz:

Eu m'escondisc, dompna, que mal no mier.²⁸

(Bertran de Born was a lover of My Lady Maeut de Montaignac, the wife of Talairan, who was the very lady that I have told you in the explication of the sirvente of the "borrowed lady." And as I have told you, she separated him of herself and and gave him a leave to quit her service; she accused him about My Lady Guischarde, the wife of the Viscount of Comborn, a noble lady who came from Bourgogne, sister to Lord Guischarde of Beaujeu. She was a gracious lady, educated and accomplished in all beauties, and he praised her greatly in words and in songs.

Bertran, before he saw her, had loved her for the good of which he heard her being talked about, and before she had come to marry the Viscount of Comborn; and for the joy which he had because of her coming, he made the couplets which say:

Ah, Limousin, tender land courteous

And for this lady, Guischarde, My Lady Maeut separated him of herself, for she believed that he loved her better than herself and that Guischarde made him love. And on the subject of this separation he made the "borrowed lady" and the sirvente which says,

I justify myself, for I am not to blame.)

Razo III narrates how Bertran, expelled by Maeut, visited a wise and thoughtful lady, Tibors de Montausier,

Bertrans de Born si fo acomjadatz de soa dompna, ma dompna Maeuz de Montaignac, e no'ill tenc pro sacramenz ni esditz qu'el fezes en comtan ni en chantan qu'ela volgues creire qu'el non ames Na Guiscarda.

E si s'en anet en Saintonge vezer ma dompna Na Tibors de Montausier, qu'era de las plus prezadas domnas que fossen el mon, de beutat e de valor e d'enseingnamen. Et aquesta domna era moiller del seingnor de Chales a de Berbesil e de Montausier. E'N Bertrans si·1 fetz reclam de ma dompna Maeutz que l'avia partit de si e no·1 volia creire, per sacramen ne per esdich que li fezes, qu'el non volgues ben a Na Guiscarda. E si la preguet qu'ela·1 degues recebre per cavallier e per servidor. Ma domna Na Tibors, com savia domna qu'ella era, si·1 respondet enaissi: «Bertrans, per la rason que vos etz vengutz sai a mi, eu en son mout alegre a gaia e tenc m'o a grant honor, e d'autra part si me desplatz: ad honor m'o tenc car vos m'ez vengutz vezer ni prejar que vos prenda per cavallier e per servitor; e desplatz me mout si vos avetz faich ni dich so per que ma dompna Maeuz vos aia dat comjat ni per que sia irada ab vos. Mas eu son aquella que sai ben com se cambia tost cors d'amadors e d'amairiz. E si vos non avetz faillit vas ma dompna Maeuz, tost en sabrai la vertat, e si vos retornarai en la soa gracia, s'enaissi es. E si en vos es lo faillimens, eu ni altra domna no·s deu mais acuellir ni recebre per cavallier ni per servidor. Mais eu farai ben aitan qu'eu vos penrai a mantener et a far lo concordi entre vos et

ella.» Bertrans si s'en tenc mout per pagatz de la respension de ma dompna Na Tibors e promes li qu'el non amara mais outra dompna ni servira si non ma domna Na Tibors, si causa er qu'el non pogues recobrar l'amor de ma domna Maeuz. E ma domna Na Tibors promes a·N Bertran, s'ella no·1 podia acordar ab ma domna Maeuz, qu'ela·1 recebria per cavallier e per servidor.

E non anet longa sazo que ma dompna Maeuz saup qu'En Bertrans non avia colpa, et escoutet los precs que·ill eron faich per En Bertran e si·1 tornet en gracia de vezer lo e d'auzir sos precs. Et il li comtet e·l dis lo mantenemen que·ill avia faich ma domna Na Tibors e la promession qu'ela avia faich' ad el. Don ma domna Maeuz li dis qu'el prezes comjat de ma dompna Na Tibors e que·is fezes absolver las promessions e·lz sacramens que il avian faich entre lor. Don Bertrans de Born fetz aquest sirventes:

S'abrils e foillas e flors.²⁹

(Bertran de Born was thus separated from his lady, My Lady Maeut de Montagnac, and nothing helped, even swearing and protesting that he could make in words and in poetry, so that she would believe he did not love Lady Guischarde.

And he went to Saintonge to see My Lady Tibors de Montausier, who was one of the ladies most highly esteemed, for beauty, for merit and for good manners. And this lady was the wife of the master of Chalais and Barbezieux and Montausier. And Sir Bertran lamented greatly that My Lady Maeut had separated him of herself and would not believe, however much he swore and protested as he could, that he did not love Lady Guischarde. And such was the prayer that she would deign to accept him for knight and servant. My Lady Tibors, being such a thoughtful lady as she was, responded to him thus: "Bertran, because the reason that you have come is known to me, I am really happy and delighted, and I take it a great honour to me. On the other hand, I am displeased. Indeed I hold it an honour that you have come to see me and to pray me to take you for knight and servant; but it displeases me much if you have done or told such things because of which My Lady Maeut had given you a leave to quit your service, and had been irritated at you. Yet I am a woman who knows well how things change quickly in the courses of men and women in love. And if you have not committed any error towards My Lady Maeut, I shall know the truth quickly, and so I shall send you to return to her grace, if

things are as you said. And if the fault is on your side, neither I nor any other lady should ever welcome you or receive you for knight and servant. Yet I will help you as well as I can for supporting you and for making peace between you and her. Bertran was quite satisfied at the reply of My Lady Tibors and promised her that he would not love nor serve any other lady but Lady Tibors if it happened that he could not recover the love of My Lady Maeut. And My Lady Tibors promised Sir Bertran that she would accept him for knight and servant if she could not reconcile between him and My Lady Maeut.

And it was not long before My Lady Maeut learned that Sir Bertran was not to blame; she heard the prayers that Bertran made her and rendered him the grace to see him and to hear his prayers. And he narrated her and told her of the assistance that My Lady Tibors had made, and of the promise that she had made towards him. My Lady Maeut told him to take the leave of My Lady Tibors and to invalidate the promises and the vows that they had made between them. Sir Bertran de Born made this sirvente :

If April, leaves and flowers.)

The reconciliation was done already in *Razo* IV. Bertran was enjoying all her favours exclusively to the envy and anger of her other admirers :

Bertrans de Born si s'apellava «Rassa» ab lo comte Jaufre de Bretaingna, qu'era fraire del rei Jove e d'En Richart, qu'era coms de Peitieu. En Richartz e·N Jaufres si s'entendion en la domna d'En Bertran de Born, Na Maeuz de Montaignac, e·l reis N'Anfos d'Arragon, e·N Raimons, lo coms de Tolosa. Et ella los refudava totz per En Bertran de Born, que avia pres per entendedor e per entendedor e per castiador. E per so que ill remasesen dels precis d'ella, el volc mostrar al comte Jaufre quals era la domna en cui el s'entendia, e si la lauzet en tal maineiera que par qu'el l'agues vista nuda e tenguda. E volc ben c'om saubes que Na Maeuz era la soa domna, aquella que refudava Peiteus—so era En Richartz, qu'era coms de Peitieu,—e·N Jaufre, qu'era coms de Bretaingna, e·l rei d'Aragon, qu'era seingner de Sarragoza, e·l comte Raimon, qu'era seingner de Tolosa ; e per so dis En Bertrans :

Rassa, als rics es orgoillosa

E d'aquesta razon que·us ai dicha el fetz son sirventes, e de

blasmar los rics que tenon don e que mal volen e sonan e que senes tort ochaisonen, e, qui lor quier merce, que non perdonen ni servizi non guieron, et aquels que mais non parlon si non de volada d'austor, ni mais d'amor ni d'armas non auson parlar entre lor. E volia que·1 coms Richartz guerrejes lo vescomte de Lemogas e que·1 vescoms si deffendes proosamen. E d'aquestas razos si fetz lo sirventes que ditz :

*Rassa, tan creis e mont e puoja*³⁰

(Bertran de Born and Count Jaufre of Bretagne, who was brother to the young king and to Lord Richard, the Count of Poitiers, were called by each other "Rassa" reciprocally.³¹ Lord Richard and Lord Jaufre courted the lady of Sir Bertran de Born, Lady Maeut of Montagnac, and so did the King Alphonse of Aragon and Lord Raimond, the Count of Toulouse. And she refused them all in favour of Sir Bertran de Born, whom she had taken for a lover and for an advisor. And in order that they might abandon their prayers to her, he would describe to Count Jaufre how was the lady whom he loved, and he praised her in such a manner as if he had seen her naked and held in his arms. And he wanted very much that one would know it was his lady, Lady Maeut, who refused the Count of Poitiers—that was King Richard, who was the Count of Poitiers—Lord Jaufre, who was the Count of Bretagne, and the King of Aragon, who was the lord of Sarragosse, and Count Raimond, who was the lord of Toulouse; and for this reason Sir Bertran says,

Rassa, she is arrogant with the powerful

And on this subject that I have told you he made his sirvente, and blames the powerful lords who do not give, who are malicious and speak ill, who dispute without cause, and who neither pardon nor recompense for the service if one asks them grace. He blames also those who talk only about the flight of a hawk, or dare not talk of love nor arms among themselves. Bertran wished that Count Richard would be engaged in battle against the Viscount of Limoges and that the Viscount of Limoges would defend himself valiantly. And on these subjects he made the sirvente which says,

Rassa, so grows, mounts and rises)

Unlike these four *razos*, which are all about Lady Maeut of Montagnac, *Razo* V describes Bertran visiting a sister of King Richard, who was the mother of the Emperor Otto :

Bertrans de Born si era anatz vezer una serror del rei Richart, que fon maire de l'emperador Oth, la quals avia nom ma domna Eleina, que fo moiller del duc de Sansoingna. Bella dompna era e molt cortesa e enseingnada, e fazia gran honor en son acuellimen et en son gen parlar. En Richartz, qu'era adoncs coms de Peitieux, si l'assis lonc sa serror e si·1 comandet qu'ela·ill disses e·ill fezes plazer e grant honor. Et ela, per la gran voluntat qu'ella avia de pretz e d'onor, e per so qu'ella sabia qu'En Bertrans era tan fort presatz hom e valens e qu'el la podia fort enansar, si·1 fez tant d'onor qu'el s'en tenc fort per pagatz et enamoret se fort de leis, si qu'el la comenset lauzar e grazir.

En aquella sazón qu'el l'avía vista, el era ab lo comte Richart en un' ost el temps d'invern, et en aquel' ost avia grant desaise. E cant venc un dia d'una domenga, era ben meitzdia passatz que non avian manjat ni begut. E la fams lo destreingnia mout, et adoncs fetz aquest sirventes que dis :

Ges de disnar non for' oïmais matis.³²

(Bertran de Born went to visit a sister of King Richard, who was the mother of Emperor Otto, who had the name of My Lady Eleina, who was the wife of the Duke of Saxony. She was a beautiful lady, very courteous and educated, and she honoured her visitors very much with her hospitality and her gentle conversation. Lord Richard, who was then the Count of Poitiers, invited Bertran beside his sister, whom he recommended to talk with him and to please and honour him greatly. And because she very much wished for merit and honour, and because she knew Bertran was a man highly esteemed and valiant who could elevate her very high. She honoured him so courteously that he was quite satisfied and so deeply amorous of her as he began to praise and glorify her.

When Bertran had visited her, he was with Count Richard in army during the season of winter, and the army suffered seriously from the shortage of provisions. And when he marched one Sunday, he had nothing to eat and drink though it well passed the noon. And the hunger tormented him much. Then he made this sirvente which says,

In any manner it won't be too soon for meal.)

Stronski speculates in details over the names mentioned in these five *razos*, obliterates almost all names of the ladies as unidentifiable or unable to fit in the years that Bertran's love adventures seem to have taken place, that is, about 1185. First, no name of Guillem de Talairan is seen either in the family of Montagnac or in the family of Talairan. Moreover, only the eldest brother bore the family name of Talairan in those days, therefore, Guillem de Talairan, reportedly the husband of Maeut de Montagnac, can not have existed.³³ Second, the wife of Helias de Talairan is named Raimonda, not Maeut, and the castle of Montagnac was brought to the Count of Talairan as the dowry of Raimonda. Hence no other lady but Raimonda de Talairan could bear the title of Montagnac, and therefore Maeut de Montagnac can not have existed, either.³⁴ Equally dubious are the three sisters of Turenne in *Razo I*, Maeut de Montagnac, Maria de Ventadorn and Elis de Monfort. Maria de Ventadorn certainly married Èble IV of Ventadorn. Yet he was born about 1170 and married first Maria de Limoges. Since Maria de Turenne was his second wife, her marriage cannot have taken place before 1190, much less likely before the years of our present story, presumably about 1182 to 1185. Hèlis de Monfort, the wife of Bernard de Casnac, was a daughter to Raimond II of Turenne, but she was not the wife of Guillem de Gordon as the provençal biography of Jordan de Saint-Antonin claims.³⁵

Following the argument of Stronski so far, a careful reader will conjecture that Hèlis de Monfort is nearest to Bertran's lady if the troubadour used a fictitious name for his lover who was related both to the Turennes and the Talairans, for the Castle of Monfort was located in the territory of Perigord both according to Stronski and to W. Wiacek in *Lexique des noms géographiques et ethniques dans les poésies des troubadours de XIIe et XIIIe siècles*.³⁶ Yet we can not expect that Hèlis de Monfort was at the right age about 1182 to 1185 for being Bertran's Maeut, because Stronski's geneologies show that Contors de Turenne, the other sister of Hèlis and Maria, was married to Helias de Comborn, the son to Jordana de Talairan, whereas Jordana was a sister to Helias de Talairan.³⁷ Likewise Tibors de Montausier, the kind mediatress of Maeut and Bertran can not have been the lady of the three castles at Chalais, Barbezieux and Montausier simultaneously as *Razo III* claims, for the Lord of Chalais in the days of Bertran married the Lady of Montausier, and much later became the Lord of Barbezieux through his second marriage.³⁸ To identify this gentle and thoughtful lady, Tibors de Montausier, is impossible with the existing records. Despite all these evidences which loudly disprove the actuality of Bertran's lover among the Talairans, the sister to King Richard and the mother of Emperor Otto of course existed and had the name of Maeut,³⁹ not Eleine as *Razo V* claims!

I believe Pound read carefully and critically the intricate relations of all the proper names in Stronski's work, which entangles all the lords and ladies in Sir Bertran's love story into a picture puzzle impossible to straighten out. In the very beginning of "Near Perigord," we find that Pound already discarded the identification of

Maeut as the wife of Guillem de Talairan. In lines 16 to 19,

Tairiran held hall in Montagnac,
His brother-in-law was all there was of power
In Perigord, and this good union
Gobbled all the land, and held it later for some
hundred years,⁴⁰

Lord Talairan here cannot be any other than Helias de Talairan, whose wife brought the castle of Montagnac for her marriage, and the brother-in-law all powerful fits in the Viscount of Comborn, whose wife was Jordana de Talairan, Helias' sister. If Pound meant Helias and Guillem Talairan following the provençal biographies, he would mention Talairan and his brother, and not his brother-in-law. Now the union of Talairan and Comborn is not referred to at all in provençal biographies, but in Stronski's work.⁴¹ The castle of Comborn being situated right to the north of Bertran's Altaforte according to Wiacek's map,⁴² and if Monfort south east to Altaforte belongs to the territory of Perigord, Bertran's castle is completely sieged by the Talairans and the Comborns to the fright of the troubadour. Pound's 35th line, "The four round towers, four brothers—mostly fools," is apprehensible only on the background of Stronski's counting Helias' brothers as Audebert, Boson and the brother-in-law, the Viscount of Comborn,⁴³ for the provençal biographies admit only three; Helias, Guillem and Olivier, for the youngest one, Ramnulf, was a monk.⁴⁴ In Part I of Pound's poem, the author takes the only possible hypothesis that Maeut was a fictitious name for the wife of Helias de Talairan, the mistress of the Castle of Montagnac⁴⁵ and a Turenne as *Razo* I recalls, though erroneously. When Bertran was surrounded and threatened by his enemies, Pound wonders, "And Maeut failed him? Or saw through the scheme?" in line 35.

Pound in the article for *Poetry*, "On 'Near Perigord,'" studied the map of Provence,⁴⁶ and noticed the location of Bertran's Altaforte and the three castles of the three ladies in "Dompna pois de me no·us cal," Chalais, Rochecouart and Malemort. Chalais and Rochecouart flank the Talairan-Comborn siege of Altaforte from the north. The castle of Malemort, whose mistress once wished Bertran ill,⁴⁷ is closest to the south of his castle, making a convenient ally against Perigord if that is Bertran's immediate target of attack. Pound was suggested of this possible intention of Sir Bertran in his poem, "Un sirventes cui motz no falh" (A sirvente without which one lacks verse),⁴⁸ and quoted for the epigraph of "Near Perigord" the two lines from it, "A Perigord, pres del muralh/Tan que i puosch' om gitar ab malh"⁴⁹ ("At Perigord near to the wall, /Aye, within a mace throw of it").⁵⁰ It is more than likely that Bertran wrote the poem of the borrowed lady for inviting into alliance all the lords of these castles under the pretence of praising the one beautiful feature of their ladies and asking to lend it for imagining an ideal figure. Sir Bertran's aim might be a political intrigue. Pound conjectures referring to the troubadour biography of Guillem de St. Leider,

(St. Leider had done as much as Polhonac,
Singing a different stave, as closely hidden)
(11. 86-87),

interpreting St. Leider's adoration of Lady Polhonac as his plotting to win the favour of her husband.⁵¹ It was traditional among troubadours to sing of politics under the disguise of courtly love. Pound quotes from Count de Foix in l. 89,

*"Et albirar ab lor bordon—"*⁵²

to support his speculation.

In Part II, Pound gives up the pursuit of facts in history and tries several fictitious scenes highly incoherent to each other. Bertran's "Thinking of Aelis, whom he loved heart and soul . . . [*sic.*]" (l. 110) is a further evidence that Pound used Stron-ski's book, for Hèlis de Monfort is a figure possibly fit for Bertran's Maeut in Stron-ski's book only. In "Dompna pois de me no-us cal" Bertran asks her to give "Her straight speech free-running,"⁵³ so that she cannot be a Maeut. Bertran sings then the song of the borrowed lady at the castle of Ventadorn, where Sir Arrimon Luc D'Esparo interpreted the poem to be Sir Bertran's attempt to seek allies against King Richard, and

counts on his fingers, Montfort,
Rohecouart, Chalais, the rest, the tactic,
Malemort, guesses beneath, sends word to Coeur-
de-Lion . . . (11. 121-123).

The name of Sir Arrimon is borrowed from Bertran's poem, "Lo coms m'a mandat,"⁵⁴ with no other possible association. His report may or may not have resulted in a war where

. . . de Born smoked out, trees felled
About his castle . . . (11. 124-125),

as Bertran anticipated in his sirvente to challenge his enemies,

E·m fon om ma terra e la m'art
E·m fa de mos arbres eissart
E mescla·1 gra en la palha⁵⁵
(" . . . they destroy and burn my land and make wreck of my
trees, and scatter the corn through the straw")⁵⁶

In the last scene, after Bertran's death King Richard, Arnaut Daniel and a fictitious troubadour called Cino⁵⁷ (acting for Pound's mask) discuss the riddle of who

Maeut can be. The identification of Maeut is impossible, for the two possibilities antagonize each other, Hèlis de Monfort and Maeut of Plantagenet, the sister of Richard and the Duchess of Saxony,

Plantagenet puts the riddle: "Did he love her?"

And Arnaut parries: "Did he love your sister?"

"Say that he saw the castles, say that he loved Maeut!"

"Say that he loved her, does it solve the riddle?"

(11. 146-156)

Following the dialogue there looms up the scene in Dante's *Inferno* (XXVIII, 118-138) that Bertran walks in damnation,

*. . . that headless trunk, that bears for light
Its own head swinging, gripped by the dead hair . . .*

(11. 164-165).

The severed figure of Bertran in the retribution and its irretrievability is symbolic of the irreconcilability to identify Maeut when two possibilities fight between them. The fractured, incoherent scenes are set against each other deliberately, making a symbol by the form characteristic of the Post-Symbolist poetry.

Why did Pound use Arnaut Daniel in this conference scene? The answer is presumably Arnaut's being the author of "*trobar clus*" (l. 140) or closed, esoteric troubadour poetry. Such was the esotericism of Arnaut that Pound refers to the miracle that the troubadour passed away "In sacred odour" (l. 161),⁵⁸ as if he were a Catholic saint. This miracle story suggests that Pound believes the troubadours' courtly love is a kind of religion especially in its most hidden form. For a careful reader of Pound, who has ever investigated the poet's profound and very consistent concern and research in the Hellenic fertility rites, it is not difficult to guess what religion Pound had in mind, for in Part III, Maeut is compared to the young grass in spring. Arnaut must be a saint in some fertility cult if ever he were a saint in this poem.

Maeut, whom Pound pursues in the spring of Provence, replies to the poet from high above the sky,

'Why do you love me? Will you always love me?

But I am like the grass, I can not love you.' (11. 181-182)

Pof. Hugh Kenner's interpretation that Maeut's state is as unawakened as the grass and her being a Mrs. Bovary in love⁵⁹ is very inadequate since line 182 is an echo of Arnaut Daniel's,

Ans per s'amor sia laurs o genebres,⁶⁰

in his Canzo XVI. "Her love is as the laurel or the broom is,"⁶¹ translated Pound in *The New Age* in 1911. Arguing about Canzo XVI, Pound believes the lady Arnaut adored therein must be Richard's sister, for in the modern French, "planter genêt" or to plant a broom tree (in the Provençal "Planta genebres" according to Pound),⁶² can make a pun with "Lady Plantagenet." Whether Maeut can be Lady Plantagenet or not, Arnaut Daniel served to plant a broom tree through his adoring a lady. To plant a vegetative life in a fertility cult is evidently the aim of the troubadour's poetry in Pound's interpretation of courtly love, and Pound himself for some reason failed to imitate the achievement.

As early as 1908, Pound collected in his first book of poems a curious piece called "Oltre la Torre: Rolando,"

There dwelt a lady in a tower high
Foul beasts surrounded it,
I scattered them and left her free.

O-la! Oll-aa! The green-wood tree
Hath many a smooth sward under it!

My lady hath a long red cloak,
Her robe was of the sun,
This blade hath broke a baron's yoke,
That hath such guerdon won.

Yea I have broke my Lord Gloom's yoke
New yoke will I have none,
Save the yoke that shines in the golden bow
Betwixt the rain and the sun.

Ol-la! Ol-la! the good geen-wood!
The good green wood is free!
Say who will lie in the bracken high
And laugh, and laugh for the winds with me?⁶³

Through the youthful jest, rhapsody and laughter, the theme is crystal clear. The lady wearing the sun like the Virgin in the Book of Revelation (xii, 1) is the Platonic Ideal and the object of troubadours' love, and the aim of the adoration is the fertility of the land which the good green wood tree symbolizes. Such was Pound's interpretation of the mysteries of the *trobar clus*. Against the ascetic or Platonic courtly love which was ultimately absorbed in the contemplation of monks, Pound suggested in "Psychology and Troubadour" (1916) that a "chivalric contemplation"

existed in troubadours' poetry, and recommended the latter for being "more in accord with 'mens sana in corpore sano.'"⁶⁴ Pound assumed that this "chivalric" contemplation so vividly alive in the troubadours retains some undying heritages from the ancient fertility rituals whose sources must be traced up to the Egyptian worship of Isis. One can select evidences from the highly suggestive passages Pound so liberally added to his argument of the psychology and troubadour, for instance,

Whatever one may think of the pagan survivals in Mariolatry or of the cult of virginity, it is certain that nothing exists without due cause or causes. The language of the Christian mystics concerning the "bride" and the rest of it; the ancient ideas of union with the god, or with Queen Isis—all these, as "atmospheric influences," must be weighed; together with the testimony of the arts, and their progression of content.⁶⁵

The ancient mysteries of Isis, the worship of the Queen of the three kingdoms and the Greeks' mystic marriage with the goddess in the Eleusinian Mysteries⁶⁶ were preserved, as Pound claims, not only in the Christian mystics' marriage with God but also in the troubadours' courtly love. More than one French writer detected in the mariolatry the same heritage of Isis cult: Gerard de Nerval's *Aurelia* was succeeded by Remy de Gourmont in *D'Un pays lointain*. The latter's *Le lain mystique* delighted Pound by collecting the remains of the Hellenic, pagan worships in the Medieval Latin hymns of Godeschalk.⁶⁷ Yet the idea that the object of the courtly love must be the fertility of the land even as the Eleusinian rituals in Athens were conducted for the purpose is Pound's own. He loved to think of Isis Mysteries as the source of Platonism and subsequently of the Western culture, following Plutarch as already discussed in this paper (p. 79). Neither *The Cantos* nor *Guide to Kulchur* can be apprehended without accepting this major theme of his life. Pound the aesthetic certainly treasured Plutarch's thesis that the worship of Isis generates within man insatiable craving for beauty.⁶⁸ He cherished the troubadours for their transmitting the heritage.

Read, for instance, the scene in Canto XC, where the poet's invocation to Isis-Kuanon most exoterically reveals Pound's own "Eleusis," the mystery that the adoration of Isis the Platonic Ideal and Beauty will release the soul from death and release the land from the waste. There at the poet's prayer of "M'elevasti," (90/606) the woodland arises,

woodland *επι Χθονι*⁶⁹
the trees rise
and there is a wide sward between them
(90/608).

Even retaining the word "sward" or grass-covered ground from "Oltre la Torre:

Rolando," Pound preserved and developed his theme from 1908 to 1955 the year that Canto XC was written. Pound's perseverance in the belief that man's worship of beauty blesses the land with art works which are the real fruits of spiritual and sensual fertility proved its validity in the achievement of *The Cantos*.

Thus in the parallelism of the mariolatory of the Catholic Church, the ancient cult of Isis and the courtly love of the *trobar clus*, Pound assumed the "apocryphal" (l. 161) sainthood for Arnaut Daniel, for his death was sanctified with a sacred odour comparable to a miracle when a Catholic saint triumphs into heaven. Thus Maeut's being like the grass in love suggests nothing but that Pound too could generate a vegetative life even as Arnaut Daniel planted a broom tree, should the poet's adoration be proper.⁷⁰ McDougal attributed the poet's failure to the split of his heart and head,⁷¹ referring to the lines 183-184,

Or, 'Love, and I love and love you,
And hate your mind, not *you*, your soul, your hands.'

In pursuit of Maeut, the prototype of the Ideal, Pound had to spend the whole life writing *The Cantos*. Of course Pound's mind was quite incompetent yet in 1915. The lines, "... the great wheels in heaven /Bore us together ... [*sic.*] surging ... [*sic.*] (177-178) I would like to take for the *primum mobile* in heaven, the Aristotlian cause by form, identified in scholasticism with the primal love of God that set the world in motion."⁷² Pound's belief that the troubadours were endowed "with love, 'whereby the sun doth move /And all the stars'"⁷³ is almost paranoiac but serious. Moreover, the principle of "UBI AMOR IBI OCULUS,"⁷⁴ which concludes Canto XC, must lead the loving poet to the intellectual insight, and hence to the ideal unity of head and heart. Bertran, who created the ideal Maeut in the poem, could not achieve this unity in the actual life but caused fights between father and son,⁷⁵ and suffered the consequence in his severed head and heart. Pound himself was symbolically punished in the failure of reaching out to the Ideal at the end of the poem.

The image of Maeut soaring up in the spring of Auvezere away from the poet is unified in transcendence. In the epigraph of Part III, "*Ed eran due in uno, ed uno in due,*" which is part of Dante's comment on the severed body of Bertran (*Inferno*, XXVIII, 125) is used by Pound with the emphasis on the unity, though it never makes any reconciliation possible on earth. Pound selected for the after-image of Maeut the two lovely hands of the lady at Chalais, evoked in "*Dompna pois de me no-us cal.*" It is significant that the Viscountess of Chalais is no other than the mediatress between Maeut and Bertran in *Razo* III. Pound in l. 30 saw one frail hand point out the castles around Bertran's Altaforte on the map as if helping his search of Maeut. Tibors de Montausier, Viscountess of Chalais, is left unidentified in Stronski's book. All we know about her are the two hands, part of the luminous details to represent collectively Maeut as the Ideal, but to be seen only in the fractured states on earth. Yet the mediatress is gone at the end also,

There shut up in his castle, Tairiran's
 She who had nor ears nor tongue save in her
 hands,
 Gone—ah, gone—untouched, unreachable!

for Tibors de Montausier is unified into Maeut only beyond the experience of her earthly lover. There is left behind "A broken bundle of mirrors,"⁷⁶ broken but the sole available reflections of the Ideal for the poet.

Interpreting thus far "Near Perigord" in reference to Stronski's book, one is surprised to find how perfectly the poem makes the very étude of *The Cantos*. Pound proceeded with the techniques he acquired by writing "Near Perigord" and tried "Three Cantos," as impulsive, as Browningsque and as Vorticist as "Near Perigord." No wonder Kwannon

Footing a boat that's but one lotus petal,⁷⁷

leads her triumphant march in "Three Cantos, I." Pound's search of Maeut continues, already transfigured into the search of his synthesis of the Oriental and Occidental Ideals, Isis-Kuanon. As Pound investigated Bertran's love legends in Vorticist poetry while pursuing the image of Maeut to idealize, so did he investigate in the relationship of poetry and the rise of cities, of art and political economy while pursuing the numerous variations of Isis to idealize simultaneously. It is fair to argue that without the impact of Stronski's denial of Maeut's actuality, Pound could never stumble on the experiment of his own unique Vorticist poetry, for there Pound synthesized intellectual research and idealization by images in an unprecedented way. "Near Perigord" is *The Cantos* in a miniature size, though imperfect in reaching over to the Ideal, and has this paper not proved already that to read the poem as such makes the most fertile study of the work?

NOTES

1. *Comparative Literature* (Spring, 1956), VIII, 110-121.
2. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.
3. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972.
4. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978.
5. "Two Poems," *Poetry* (December, 1915), VII, 118.
6. Pound's translation, "Dompna Pois de Me No-Us Cal," *Personae: The Collected Shorter Poems of Ezra Pound*, 1926, rpt. (New York: New Directions, 1971), p. 105.
7. *A Lume Spento*, 1908, rpt., *Collected Early Poems of Ezra Pound*, ed. Michael John King with an Introduction of Louis L. Martz (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), p. 12.
8. "In Epitaphium Eius," 11. 4-5, *ibid.* Pound's translation of "... l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle." *Paradiso*, XXXIII, 145.
9. "... que la Musique et les Lettres sont la face alternative ici élargie vers l'obscur; scintillante là, avec certitude, d'un phénomène, le seul, je l'appelai, l'Idée." "La musique et les lettres," *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris, Pléiade, 1974), p. 649.

10. *Personae*, p. 51.
11. See Ruthven, p. 49. *The Spirit of Romance*, 1910, rpt. (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 109.
12. "Cino," *A Lume Spento*, 1908, rpt. *Personae*, p. 3.
13. "The House of Splendour," *Personae*, p. 49.
Behold mine adoration
Maketh me clear, and there are powers in this
Which, played on *by the virtues of her soul*,
Break down the four-square walls of standing time.
(The italics are mine.)
14. The fictitiousness of this character is told by Pound to Connolly. See Connolly, p. 111.
15. Pound's first reference to Richard of St. Victor's *Benjamin Minor* is in the notes to "A Vision of Italy," *Personae*, 1909.
16. *Ricardo da S. Vittore: Pensieri sull' Amore*, (Milano: Ezra Pound, 1956), p. 8.
17. *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1971), p. 605. Quoted from *Ricardo da S. Vittore*, p. 27. (Human soul is not love but love proceeds from the soul and though the soul does not strive in itself but love does which proceeds from itself.)
18. Charles Norman, *Ezra Pound* (rev. ed.; U.S.A.: Minerva Press, 1969), p. 399.
19. "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris," *The New Age*, December 7, 1911, p. 130.
20. See Section 64. J. Gwyn Griffiths, ed. *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Swansee, Wales: University of Wales Press, 1970), p. 221.
21. *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 110.
22. See Wyndham Lewis's comparison of Vorticism, Cubism and Impressionism. "Notes and Vortices, II," *Wyndham Lewis the Artists: From "Blast" to Burlington House* (London: Laidlow and Laidlow, 1939), pp. 137 f.
23. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1928), p. 39.
24. Osiris, the origin of things, is assumed to be in the robe of one simple colour, the colour of light. When he is torn into the phenomena, he is represented by Isis, the matter in the multi-colored robe. See Plutarch, Section 77, Griffiths, p. 241.
25. Though Pound mentioned neither Isis nor Kuanon in earlier cantos, the goddess Isis appears in the very center of "The Little Review Calendar," *The Little Review* (Spring, 1922), p. 40; and the image of Kuanon in triumph is seen in "Three Cantos, I," *Poetry* (June, 1917), X, 119.
26. Stanislaw Stronski, *La légende amoureuse de Bertran de Born* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion. Édouard Champion, 1914), p. 11.
27. J. Boutière and A. H. Schutz, ed. *Biographies des troubadours: Textes provençaux des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles*, Irénée-Marcel Cluzel, tr. (Paris: A. G. Nizet, 1973), p. 75.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
31. For this translation, see Boutière and Schutz, p. 73. "Rassa" means extortion.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
33. Stronski, p. 17.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-25.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
36. Stronski, p. 58. Wiacek, "Monfort (z) (MONTFORT)—château Monfort en Périgord. . . ." (Paris: A. G. Nizet, [n.d.]), p. 139.
37. See Stronski, "Tableau Rectifié." See also the Appendix I to this paper.
38. Stronski, p. 79.

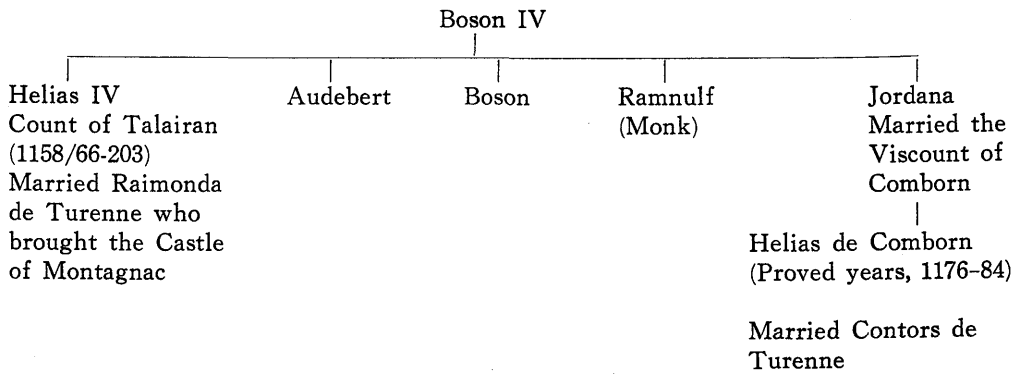
39. Ibid., p. 95.
40. *Personae*, p. 151. Subsequent quotations from "Near Perigord" is referred to this book by line numbers in parentheses.
41. See Stronski, "Tableau."
42. See Appendix II attached to this paper. The map is taken from Wiacek's *Lexique*. In the spelling and pronunciations of the local names Appendix II follows Stronski and Pound.
43. Stronski, pp. 14-19 and "Tableau Rectifié."
44. See Stronski, p. 12 and "Ancien Tableau."
45. Ibid., p. 25 and "Tableau Rectifié." See Appendix II attached to this paper.
46. "Second, as to the possibility of a political intrigue behind the apparent love poem we have no evidence save that offered by my own observation of the geography of Perigord and Limoges." *Poetry* (December, 1915), VII, 145-146.
47. See Pound, "Na Audiart," *A Lume Spento*, 1908. *Personae*, pp. 8-9. Pound's poem depends on Bertran's "Dompna pois de me no·us cal," ll. 41-46; "N'Audiartz, si be·m vol mal . . . s'amors ni·s vols en biais." Carl Appel, ed. *Provençalische Chrestomathie*, 1907, rpt. (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1974), p. 61.
48. André Berry, ed., *Florilège des troubadours, publié avec une préface, une traduction et des notes* (Paris: Librairie Firmin-Didot, 1930), p. 124.
49. *Personae*, p. 151. Berry, p. 126.
50. Pound's translation in *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 45.
51. Guillem de San Leider adored Marquise de Polhonac, who did not want any troubadour for herself, and replied that she would accept him if her husband urged her. The poet succeeded in moving her husband with his *canzo*, "Dona, ieu vos soi messatgiers." See Camille Chabaneau, ed. *Les biographies des troubadours en langue provençale* (Toulouse: Édouard Privat, 1885), p. 59. Pound refers to this episode in Canto 4/16.
52. As McDougal points out, this line is also quoted with Pound's translation in "Troubadours—Their Sorts and Conditions,"

Ben deu gardar lo sieu baston
Car frances sabon grans colps dar
Et albirar ab lor bordon
. . .
Let no man lounge amid the flowers
Without a stout club of some kind.
Know ye the French are stiff in stour
And sing not all they have in mind . . .

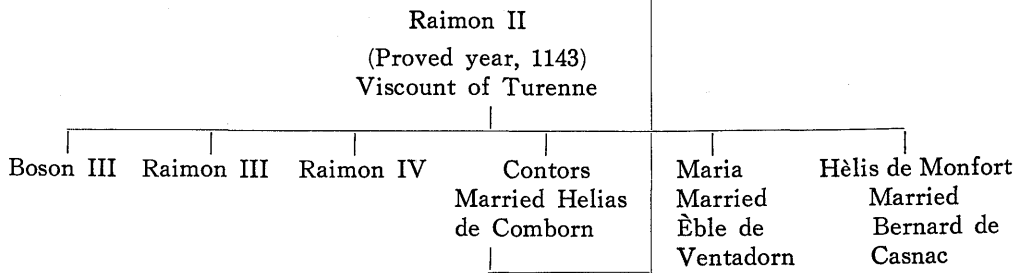
Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, ed. T. S. Eliot (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), p. 101. Since Pound singled out this line, the translation should be, "Imagine from their verse."
53. *Personae*, p. 105.
54. See Makin, p. 42 and p. 295.
55. "Un sirventes cui motz no falh," ll. 24-26. Berry, p. 124.
56. Pound's translation, *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 46.
57. See Note 14.
58. Pound refers to the sacred odour in *Make It New* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934), p. 43. See Connolly, p. 116.
59. "The Broken Mirrors and the Mirror of Memory," *Motive and Method in The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, ed. Lewis Leary (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1954), pp. 9-10.
60. René Lavaud, "Les Poésies d'Arnaut Daniel," *Annales du Midi* (1910), XXII, 448.
61. "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris, IV," *The New Age*, December 21, 1911, p. 179.

62. Ibid.
63. *Collected Early Poems of Ezra Pound*, p. 51.
64. *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 94.
65. Ibid., pp. 95-96.
66. See Thomas Taylor, *The Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries: A Dissertation* (4th ed.; New York, J. W. Bouton, 1891), pp. 176-177. For the evidence that Pound read this book, see Carroll F. Terrell, "Mang-Tsze, Thomas Taylor and Madam Y'AH" *Paideuma* (Spring & Fall, 1978), VII, 141-154.
67. *The Spirit of Romance*, pp. 97-98.
68. Plutarch, Section 78. Griffiths, p. 243.
69. The Greek phrase means "out of the underworld."
70. I don't believe that Pound differentiated the woodland tree in "Oltre la Torre: Rolando" and the image of the grass in "Near Perigord" to indicate that the grass is in the lower stage of fertility because of Maeut's "unawakened state." First, there is no suggestion of Maeut's "unawakenedness in the poem. Second, the grass land or pasture is a very important image of Pound's fertility. Witness the Monte dei Paschi or the mountain of the pasture in Cantos 42 to 43.
71. McDougal, p. 66.
72. See Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, tr. A. H. Downes (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 58. McDougal's interpretation that these wheels are the wheels of God's justice is convincing if the poem is not written by Pound. Yet one defect of Pound as an aesthetic poet is his lack of perseverance in the pursuit of moral problems as T. S. Eliot was disgusted in discussing his hell cantos in *After Strange Gods*. Using Bertran's retribution in hell for the symbol of the failure to identify Maeut, Pound shifted the problem of morals to the problem of art.
73. See Note 8. It is possible that Pound, while seeking the source of Greek philosophy in Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries, identified this Aristotelian cause by form with the symbol of wheel in the Bacchic Mysteries. Thomas Taylor wrote that Dionysus' wheel is the mundane intellect, presumably indicating the intellect working to move the material world. See Taylor, p. 208.
74. See Note 16. Canto 90/609.
75. Bertran caused a discord between King Henry II of England and his son, young Henry, according to Dante's *Inferno*, XXVIII, 133-135. Pound refers to the interview of King Henry II and Bertran after the death of Henry the young king, 11. 40-46, following the troubadour biography, "Lo reis Enrics d'Englaterra si tenia assis en Bertran de Born . . ." Chabaneau, pp. 22-23.
76. The mirror in the Eleusinian Mysteries symbolizes "the inaptitude of the universe to receive the plenitude of intellectual or spiritual perfection." Proclus quoted by Taylor, p. 191.
77. *Poetry* (June, 1917), X, 119.

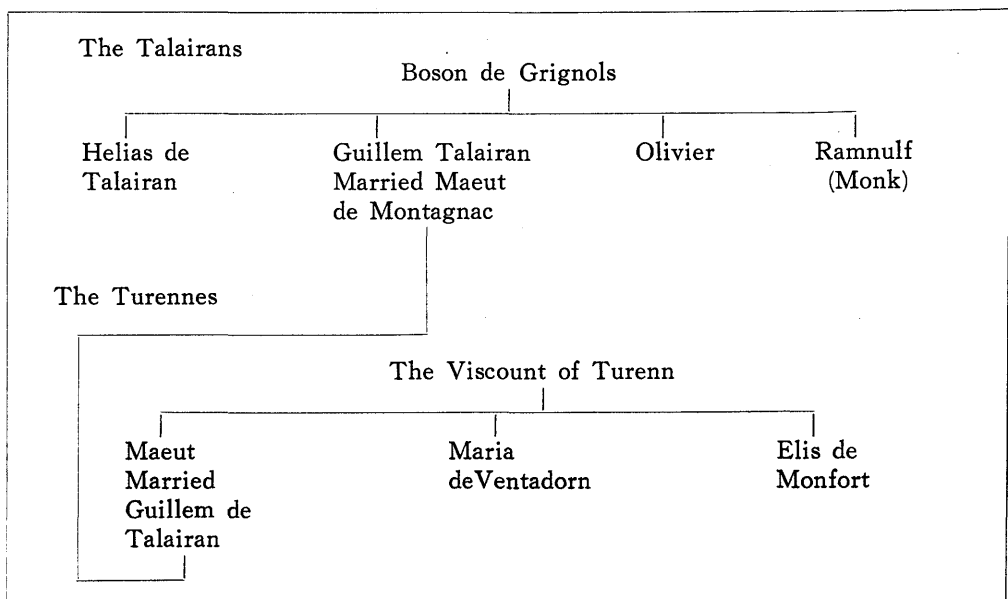
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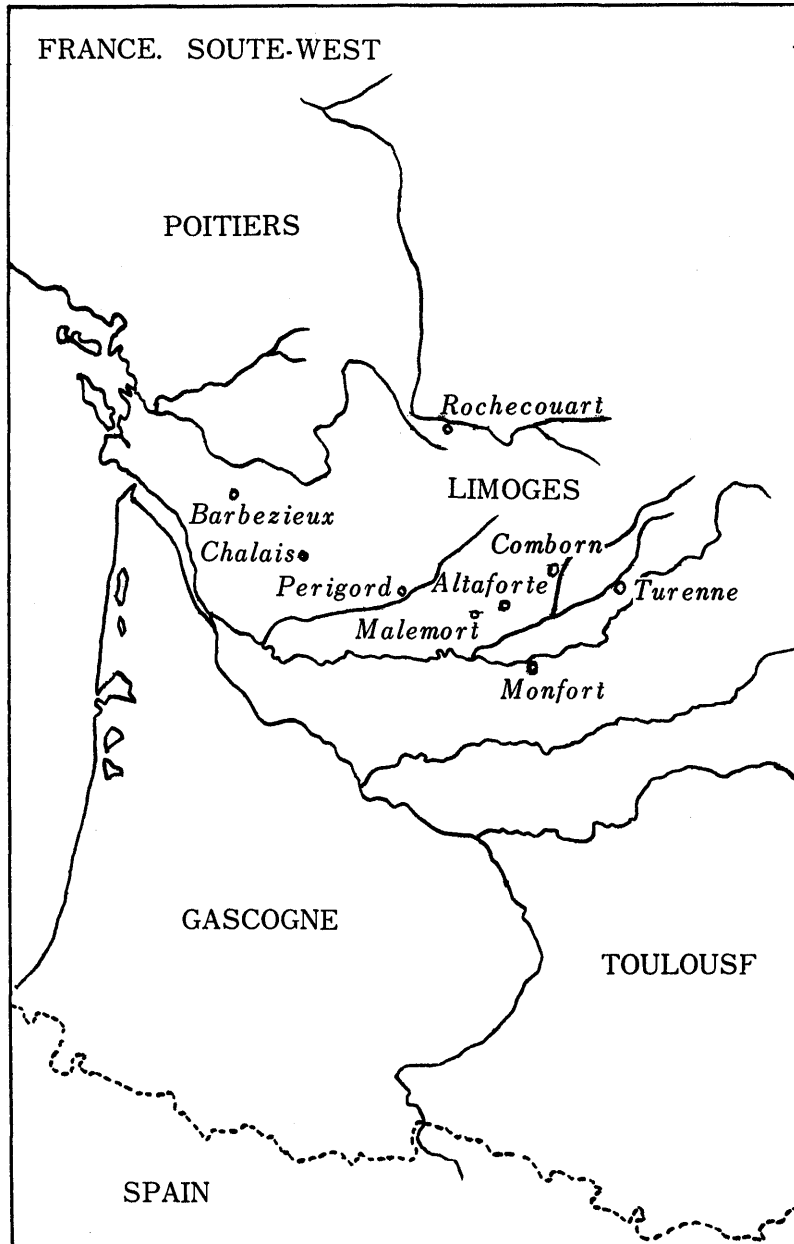


The Turenne



The Talairans and the Turennes
according to the ancient trouba-
dours' biographies





Stanislaw Stronski's *La légende amoureuse de
Bertran de Born* and Ezra Pound's "Near Perigord"

Akiko Miyake

Ezra Pound in 1915 wrote "Near Perigord" where he speculated whether Bertran de Born's "Dompna pois de me no·us cal" was a genuine love poem or a political intrigue. Not merely the theme is uniquely intellectual, but also the technique is peculiar and "Vorticist." Pound followed Wyndham Lewis's claim that modern art should explode the world into fragments, and blasted the troubadour's world into incoherent pieces. The tremendous impact given at the very core of Pound's creative life leads one to the assumption that Pound read Stanislaw Stronski's *La légende amoureuse de Bertran de Born* (1914), where the author disproved the historical existence of Maeut de Montagnac, Bertran's lady in courtly love. Bertran was Pound's favorite mask, and Maeut represented for Pound the Idea whose pursuit motivated him to write *The Cantos*.

In reference to Stronski's book, one can trace how Pound pursues Maeut. With the materials Stronski gathered, her identity is made impossible. Both "Aelis" and a sister to King Richard are suggested implicitly by Stronski, while the two hypotheses antagonize each other. The image of Bertran with his head severed in Dante's hell symbolizes this contradiction. At the end, Maeut ascends to heaven, comparing herself to grass. This last image, together with Pound's homage to Arnaut Daniel, proves his interpretation of troubadour poetry as inherited from the ancient Isis Cult.

Thus the poem proves to be the very étude of *The Cantos*. Just as Pound investigated Bertran's love legends while adoring Maeut, so did he investigate the relationship of poetry and culture while adoring Isis in diverse figures. It is fair to argue that Pound stumbled on the technique of *The Cantos* working on Stronski's book.